

FIRE FIGHTER TRAINEE EXAMINATION STUDY GUIDE



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The pages in this Study Guide are numbered 1 through 15. It is your responsibility to make sure you have a complete booklet.

DO <u>NOT</u> BRING THIS STUDY GUIDE TO THE WRITTEN TEST

1. Message from Los Angeles County Fire Chief and Fire Fighters



Fire Chief Daryl L. Osby

Congratulations on your decision to apply for the Los Angeles County Fire Fighter Trainee examination! While we expect this exam to be competitive, we commend you for embarking on this exciting career opportunity. The fire service is a proud and noble profession, and Los Angeles County Fire Fighters enjoy an internationally renowned reputation for being the best. Each and every day, they play an increasingly important role in the communities in which they serve.

Please take the time to read the helpful commentary provided below by three of our current Fire Fighters, along with the exam information that follows. We hope that you will be encouraged by this advice as you begin your journey towards the highly prized career as a Fire Fighter – a career rife with excitement, fulfillment and purpose.

Commentary From Los Angeles County Fire Fighters

Three members of the Los Angeles County Fire Department were asked the following questions: 1) What are the most important qualities for Los Angeles County Fire Fighters? 2) What can a candidate do to prepare for a career with the Los Angeles County Fire Department – physically, emotionally, and mentally? 3) What do you like about being a member of the Los Angeles County Fire Department? and 4) What do you like about the fire service? Their thoughts are shared below:

Fire Captain Dennis Breshears, Fire Station 40

"To be successful as a Los Angeles County Fire Fighter you need to be flexible and you need a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity. I believe that if you have a positive attitude you can influence others to achieve more and you can have a positive affect on those around you. You must also have integrity on duty and off duty. Remember, just because you're not in uniform, you still represent the image,

traditions, dedication, honor and sacrifices of those who have served before you.

The level of your success will be measured by the effort you are willing to make. Train with a partner, someone who will push you to obtain a higher level of fitness. It is important to have a balanced fitness routine; strength training, cardiovascular training, core training, muscular endurance and mental strength are essential to your career.

Prior to coming to the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD), I served in two other fire departments. I find that due to the size and diversity of LACoFD there is an endless range of opportunities and avenues for growth. I like the ability to be a part of the tradition of the LACoFD that carries a world-renowned reputation. Being a part of the LACoFD is being part of a family and team that is second to none.

I have the honor of being a 4th generation Fire Fighter in my family. I take great pride in preserving the honor and service of those who came before me. I couldn't imagine any other choice but to be a Fire Fighter. We have the unique opportunity to come to work each day and develop life long bonds. We work together as a unit with the goal of having compassion for those around us by being willing to risk our lives for people we have yet to meet. Every day is different and you never know what challenge you may face. But one fact remains constant; you will make a difference in someone's life todav."

Fire Fighter Specialist Dan Brock, Fire Station 170

"Honesty is an important quality because we work so closely with the public and each other. Being a team player is important for Fire Fighters, they must see that the team comes first, not the individual. Integrity, always do what is right - that is what the public and the Fire Department expects. It's important to know that we represent the Fire Department at all times, as a result we have to be "BEYOND REPROACH".

To prepare for a career with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, it would be a good idea to visit several of our stations preferably a brush area and a city type of area. That way you can get an idea of the nuances of the two areas. You should talk with some of the Fire Fighters to get an idea of what is to be expected. It is important that you remain who you are, yet be able to assimilate into our Fire Department family.

The sheer size and diversity of our department makes it appealing. The different areas and assignments that a Fire Fighter can work in from the Marina to Malibu, to the inner city, to the outlying County communities are very diverse. Our transfer opportunities make all of that possible. A good fire department is judged by how progressive and how willing it is to look at and try new ideas. I believe that's what makes the Los Angeles County Fire Department the best fire department in the country.

Lastly, I like the team atmosphere of the fire service. When we have a goal, whether it be a fire, a medical rescue or any other type of call, together as a team we are able to accomplish the task."

Fire Fighter Kara Morris, Fire Station 23

"The most important qualities of a Los Angeles County Fire Fighter are determination, integrity, having a good attitude, and being a team player. We must be determined and confident in ourselves and our crew that we can take care of any situation that we are presented with. Teamwork is involved in every aspect of our job and we rely on each other every day.

In order for a candidate to prepare for a career with LACoFD, you need to get physically and mentally fit. Hike stairs with weights, simulate pulling hose, work on your cardiovascular endurance, etc. Visit stations and talk to the Fire Fighters about the job and what it entails. Do ride-a-longs if possible. Experience as an EMT will help prepare you for the medical and some of the emotional aspects of our job. Make sure you have a good

support system at home someone you trust and you can talk to. Have an outlet for your stress.

I love all that LACoFD has to offer. It is a diverse department with endless opportunities. You can specialize in just about anything from Swift Water to HazMat to USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) and beyond. We get to fight wildland fires as well as highrise and residential fires. We have a great paramedic program. You are really in control of your own career path.

My favorite part of the fire service is that we are always learning, and we are thinking on our feet. Every day is something new. We drill and prepare for situations; but when it comes down to it we get to make quick decisions at critical moments. It is a great feeling that the public has so much trust in us to help them when they are in need; and it is so rewarding to be able to help. "

2. Purpose of the Study Guide

This Study Guide is intended to assist you in preparing for the written test. You should read the entire Guide to assist you in understanding what to expect on the written test.

3. Description of the Written Test

The written test is designed to measure the skills, abilities, and work orientation needed to become a successful Fire Fighter. No prior knowledge of technical fire fighting information is necessary to take the test.

The test contains two sections. You must take and achieve a passing score in order to advance to the interview component of the Fire Fighter Trainee exam.

The first section measures abilities and skills necessary to learn the job of a Fire Fighter. The second section measures work orientation, which encompasses your views about work behavior and how to handle various work-related situations.

It is in your best interest to provide an answer to every question in both sections of the test.

The following is a brief description of each section of the written test.

<u>Abilities and Skills – Description and Sample Questions</u>

This section of the written test measures your ability to learn and perform the duties of a Fire Fighter. You will be presented with questions that have two or more answer choices, and you will need to choose the best answer for each question. If you are not sure of the answer, try to eliminate one or more choices as incorrect. Then provide your best answer.

This section of the written test has three parts: Mechanical Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Report Interpretation.

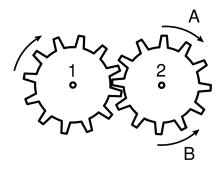
1. Mechanical Comprehension

Fire Fighters need mechanical ability to perform many job behaviors, such as operating pumps, raising and securing ladders, and making hose connections. In this part you will be presented with drawings that illustrate mechanical principles that are relevant to the job of Fire Fighter. The Mechanical Comprehension questions address mechanical principles such as Resolution of Forces, Shape and Volume, Center of Gravity, Hydraulics, and the operation of Gears, Pulley Systems, Planes and Slopes, Levers, and Structures.

Below are three sample *Mechanical Comprehension* questions:

Sample 1:

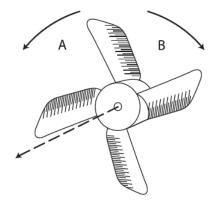
If force is applied to Gear 1 in the direction shown, which way will Gear 2 rotate? If neither, mark C.



Answer: The correct answer is B. As gear 1 turns clockwise, it applies downward force to gear 2, causing it to turn counter-clockwise.

Sample 2:

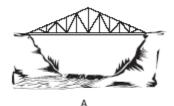
Which way must the fan turn to push air in the direction of the dashed-line arrow? If neither, mark C.



Answer: The correct answer is B. To push air in the direction of the dashed-line arrow, the fan blades must rotate clockwise. If the blades were to rotate counter-clockwise, they would push air in the opposite direction of the dashed-line arrow.

Sample 3:

Which bridge will hold more weight? If equal, mark C.





В

Answer: The correct answer is A. Bridge B has two separate truss structures (the triangular configurations of support beams), but no central support between them. Bridge B would be very weak at its center.

2. Reading Comprehension

Fire Fighters must be able to read and understand written materials including instructions, directions, procedures, warnings, manuals, bulletins, and training materials. In this part you will read short passages of text and answer questions that assess your understanding of the contents.

The Reading Comprehension passages in this test are comparable in difficulty to actual training materials that entry-level Fire Fighters are required to read as part of their training.

Below are two sample *Reading Comprehension* questions:

Sample 1:

A common fire hazard is a condition that can be found in almost all types of buildings and that encourages a fire to start. In contrast, special hazards are those that usually are characteristic of the properties associated with a given industry. It is important to correctly interpret the usage of the term "common" here: it refers to the range of settings in which a hazard might occur and not to the likelihood of the hazard occurring.

A common fire hazard is one that

- A. is found in the home rather than in industrial or business settings.
- B. is encountered in almost all types of buildings.
- C. has less serious consequences than other types of fire hazards.
- D. is present due to the conditions encountered in the properties associated with particular type of business.

Answer: The correct answer is B. The passage explains that a common fire hazard is found in almost all types of buildings.

Sample 2:

Valves are used to control the supply of water at specific points in the supply system. This is helpful if pipes need to be repaired. It allows repairs to be made at a specific point in the network of pipes, without having to shut off the supply of water to a large area. There are two different kinds of valves used in water supply systems. An indicating valve is a valve that visibly shows when the water is turned on or off. A non-indicating valve cannot be seen visually. These valves are normally buried in the ground.

What is the function of valves in water supply systems?

- A. To regulate the water flow.
- B. To regulate the water temperature.
- C. To enhance the circulation of water through pipes.
- D. To carry water from the hydrant to the hose.

Answer: The correct answer is A. The passage states that valves can shut off and control (regulate) the supply of water at specific points in the supply system.

3. Report Interpretation

Fire Fighters must be able to read and interpret charts and tables, such as those that summarize information needed to adjust settings on equipment, to make emergency medical decisions, and to understand training and operations manuals. The questions in this part measure the ability to read charts and reports concerning Fire Department operations and to correctly interpret the information.

Below are two sample *Report Interpretation* questions:

Fire Department Report				
Company	Total Hours Spent Performing Building Inspections	Total Number of Building Inspections Performed	Number of Inspections Requiring Follow-up	
Α	9	10	0	
В	13	13	2	
С	14	11	0	
D	12	9	0	

- 1. What was the average number of hours the Fire Department spent performing building inspections at these companies?
 - A. 11.3
 - B. 12.0
 - C. 12.7
 - D. 13.0
 - E. 13.3

Answer: The correct answer is B. Adding the hours spent per company (9+13+14+12=48) and dividing by the number of Companies (4) produces the average (12.0).

- 2. Which company performed the most building inspections per hour?
 - A. Company A
 - B. Company B
 - C. Company C
 - D. Company D
 - E. Both Company A and C

Answer: The correct answer is A. Company A performed 10 inspections in 9 hours (more than 1 per hour), while Company B performed 13 inspections in 13 hours (1 per hour), Company C performed 11 inspections in 14 hours (less than 1 per hour), and Company D performed 9 inspections in 12 hours (less than 1 per hour).

Work Orientation – Description and Sample Questions

This section of the written test measures your views about work-related situations and behaviors. Work Orientation includes attributes such as conscientiousness, handling work pressure, getting along with others, integrity/trustworthiness and other areas. Below are two sample Work Orientation questions:

Sample 1:

I remain calm in tense situations.

- A. Strongly Disagree
- B. Disagree
- C. In Between
- D. Agree
- E. Strongly Agree

Sample 2:

I prefer work that is routine.

- A. Strongly Disagree
- B. Disagree
- C. In Between
- D. Agree
- E. Strongly Agree

In this section of the test, select the answer that best describes you. Do not try to figure out what answer might be most desirable or expected. It is in your best interest to select the answer that most accurately reflects your views.

4. Summary of Skills and Abilities Measured on the Test

The test covers four capabilities that are important for the position of Fire Fighter. Below are definitions of these capabilities and examples of how they are represented on the job.

Mechanical Comprehension refers to the knowledge of mechanical principles that are relevant to the duties of a Fire Fighter. These include such principles as those governing the operation of Gears, Pulley Systems, Planes and Slopes, Structures, and Levers, as well as such basic principles as Hydraulics, Resolution of Forces, Shape and Volume, and Center of Gravity.

Aspects of Mechanical Comprehension	Related Fire Fighter Duties
Knowledge of gear systems	Operating equipment on the fire engine or other fire fighting apparatus
 Understanding of force and leverage principles 	Making forcible entries into buildings and vehicles
Use of hydraulics	Operating hoses and directing the water stream to put out a fire

Reading Comprehension refers to the ability to read a written passage about fire fighting, and answer a question that demonstrates your understanding of the passage.

Aspect of Reading Comprehension	Related Fire Fighter Duties
Reading and understanding information from written passages	Reading and understanding Fire Department procedure manuals and policy information
	Reading and following procedures for the use and maintenance of Fire Fighter equipment
	Following written directions as instructed by supervisors

Report Interpretation refers to the ability to read charts and reports about fire department data and interpret the information correctly.

	Aspect of Report Interpretation	Related Fire Fighter Duties
•	Reading and understanding charts and data	 Reading and interpreting numeric information and charts from training manuals
		 Interpreting numerical tables to calculate appropriate settings for operating equipment

Work Orientation asks for your views about work-related situations and behaviors. It specifically assesses ability to manage work pressure, conscientiousness, interpersonal skills, ability to get along with others, and integrity.

Aspects of Work Orientation	Related Fire Fighter Duties
Managing Work Pressure	Maintains composure in difficult situations at the fire scene or rescue situation
Conscientiousness	Stays on task and completes work, even when it is difficult or repetitive
Getting Along with Others	Gets to know and serves people in the community
Integrity	Protects the property and safety of others
Trustworthiness	Performs critical tasks at the scene of a fire in the absence of direct supervision

5. Test Tips

This section lists a variety of things you may wish to do before taking the written test.

Preparation and Study

To help with your test preparation, consider doing some or all of the following:

- 1. Go to the County of Los Angeles test preparation website:
 - Go to http://dhr.lacounty.info
 - Then click on Job Information
 - > Then click on **Employment Test Preparation**
- 2. Review the Fire Department website for more information about being a Fire Fighter and the examination process.
 - ➢ Go to www.fire.lacounty.gov
 - > Then click on Help Wanted
 - Then click on Be A Fire Fighter
 - In "Read the FAQs for more info," click on **FAQs** to see Frequently Asked Questions.
- 3. Practice Taking Tests
 - Taking tests can be challenging, but the experience can provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate how prepared you are for the job. Become comfortable with the test-taking situation by finding practice tests online or in the library. The tests should involve reading information and answering multiple-choice questions. Time yourself and practice budgeting your time so that you can effectively manage your time.

Quick Test-Taking Tips

- As best as you can, clear your schedule well before the test date. During the exam session, you will be given instruction on how to complete your answer sheets.
- Get plenty of rest the night before the test.
- > Read the test instructions carefully and follow them.
- > Before choosing an answer, read all of the answer choices.
- Be sure you are answering the right question when you are marking your answer on the answer sheet.
- Budget your time, so that you will finish the test.

6. Sample Test Answer Sheet

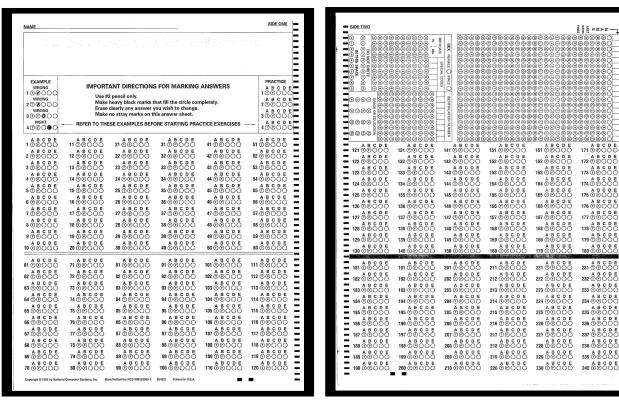
You will use answer sheets for both sections of the written exam to record your answers. During the exam session, you will be given instructions on how to complete your answer sheets.

When taking the test, be sure to check that you have marked your answer in the space on the answer sheet that corresponds to the test question. Because the answer sheet will be read by computer, it is important that you mark your answers clearly and completely erase any unintended or stray marks.

A sample answer sheet is shown below.



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THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES WISHES YOU SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING YOUR CAREER GOALS!

